

VZCZCXRO6421
PP RUEHFK RUEHKSO RUEHNAG RUEHNH
DE RUEHKO #0385/01 0500806
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
P 190806Z FEB 09
FM AMEMBASSY TOKYO
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 0916
INFO RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY
RHEHAAA/THE WHITE HOUSE WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
RUEAWJA/USDOJ WASHDC PRIORITY
RULSDMK/USDOT WASHDC PRIORITY
RUCPDOG/USDOC WASHDC PRIORITY
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC PRIORITY
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC//J5//
RHHMUNA/HQ USPACOM HONOLULU HI
RHHMHBA/COMPACFLT PEARL HARBOR HI
RHMFIUU/HQ PACAF HICKAM AFB HI//CC/PA//
RHMFIUU/USFJ //J5/JO21//
RUYNAAAC/COMNAVFORJAPAN YOKOSUKA JA
RUAYJAA/CTF 72
RUEHNH/AMCONSUL NAHA 4863
RUEHFK/AMCONSUL FUKUOKA 2519
RUEHOK/AMCONSUL OSAKA KOBE 6307
RUEHNAG/AMCONSUL NAGOYA 0346
RUEHKSO/AMCONSUL SAPPORO 3070
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 7818
RUEHUL/AMEMBASSY SEOUL 3840
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 3803

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 06 TOKYO 000385

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR E, P, EB, EAP/J, EAP/P, EAP/PD, PA;
WHITE HOUSE/NSC/NEC; JUSTICE FOR STU CHEMTOB IN ANTI-TRUST DIVISION;
TREASURY/OASIA/IMI/JAPAN; DEPT PASS USTR/PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE;
SECDEF FOR JCS-J-5/JAPAN,
DASD/ISA/EAPR/JAPAN; DEPT PASS ELECTRONICALLY TO USDA
FAS/ITP FOR SCHROETER; PACOM HONOLULU FOR PUBLIC DIPLOMACY ADVISOR;
CINCPAC FLT/PA/ COMNAVFORJAPAN/PA.

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [OIIP](#) [KMDR](#) [KPAO](#) [PGOV](#) [PINR](#) [ECON](#) [ELAB](#) [JA](#)

SUBJECT: DAILY SUMMARY OF JAPANESE PRESS 02/19/09

INDEX:

- (1) Moves to oust Aso coming into open in LDP (Tokyo Shimbun)
- (2) Okinawa assembly poll: 60 PERCENT disapprove of Guam pact (Ryukyu Shimpo)
- (3) Naval hospital construction to start in FY2009 (Ryukyu Shimpo)
- (4) Analysis of U.S. Marines Guam relocation agreement by Kunihiko Miyake -- Pact designed to maintain deterrence and reduce burdens on local communities (Sankei)
- (5) Disruption by Sea Shepherd unforgivable: Obstructive activities are crime, terrorism, Agriculture Minister Ishiba underscores (Suisan Keizai Shimbun)

ARTICLES:

- (1) Moves to oust Aso coming into open in LDP

TOKYO SHIMBUN (Page 3) (Full)
February 19, 2009

Junior members of the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) yesterday started calling for replacing Prime Minister Aso, whose administration is now on the verge of collapse. Since Shoichi Nakagawa resigned as finance minister, public support rates for the cabinet have further nosedived. In what state will he pass his final days in office?

Junior members openly demanding Aso's resignation

House of Representatives member Masazumi Gotoda openly called for the prime minister's resignation. He told reporters: "(The prime minister) should decide by himself on whether to resign. I want him to take an objective view about himself and decide to transfer political power. It should be senior lawmakers' responsibility to entrust the future of the LDP to a younger generation." Gotoda called for a generational change, citing such names as Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries Minister Shigeru Ishiba and State Minister in Charge of Consumer Affairs Seiko Noda.

Gotoda is close to Finance Minister Kaoru Yosano and Policy Research Council Deputy Chairman Hiroyuki Hosoda. In the latest LDP presidential race, he supported Yosano. He is in his third term and does not belong to any faction. In the LDP, however, many are taking the remarks by Gotoda seriously, instead of taking it as just a comment by a junior member about a possible resignation of the prime minister.

The Prime Minister's Office has become nervous since the Gotoda remark popped up prior to the anticipated passage of the fiscal 2009 budget. Chief Cabinet Secretary Takeo Kawamura assailed: "He should be aware that the budget is at a critical juncture."

Cynically, though, the predicted passage of the budget will inevitably trigger moves to oust Aso. Former Secretary General Hidenao Nakagawa, who has distanced himself from Aso, is making preparations to form a new parliamentary group after the fiscal 2009 budget bill passes the House of Representatives.

TOKYO 00000385 002 OF 006

A bill related to the fiscal 2008 supplementary budget that would finance a controversial cash handout plan is expected to be brought back into the Lower House for a revote in late February. The revote is also likely to be linked to dumping Aso.

Former Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi revealed in Moscow on the 18th his intention to sit out a Lower House session if the ruling coalition forces passage of the bill through a revote. Koizumi's remarks, following his earlier criticism of the prime minister, are to express "No" to the Aso administration. More LDP members may begin echoing Koizumi.

In a meeting of the LDP Reform Implementation Taskforce yesterday, some participants called for reviewing the party's rules on election for the premiership, as Lower House member Masahiko Shibayama said: "Conditions for candidacy and other matters should be fully discussed." Such calls reflect a desire to bring forward the LDP leadership race from September.

The main theme in a meeting of about 10 junior and mid-ranking lawmakers last night was who should be Aso's successor, with one participant saying: "Unless the party brings in a new prime minister, the party will not be able to win the next election."

Aso set to hold on for months

Following Finance Minister Nakagawa's resignation, an aide to the prime minister said: "We had already anticipated there would be moves to send Prime Minister Aso out of the office. But it will be impossible to do so unless the prime minister decides to resign by himself. He has no intention to step down." In the ruling camp, as well, the dominant view is that the prime minister will not easily quit. Aso appears to intend to hold on for months.

Aso agreed with Russian President Dmitry Medvedev in their meeting the 18th to arrange a visit to Japan by Prime Minister Vladimir Putin in May. This agreement shows his strong eagerness to continue to take charge of government even after the fiscal 2009 budget clears the Diet.

Aides to the prime minister have suggested compiling an additional supplementary budget bill after the budget is enacted. This is also aimed to contain moves to replace Aso, setting forth the need to buoy up the economy as a just cause.

In order to force the prime minister to resign, there will be no other means but to adopt a no-confidence motion against the cabinet in the Lower House or to invoke a provision that stipulates that the party head can be dismissed with support from the majority of LDP Diet members and local representatives. Both hurdles are not easy to overcome. Given this, so a senior LDP member expressed concern that the party might break up before an election is carried out.

Even if Aso remains in the office until the summer, it will become impossible for him to continue resisting growing calls for moving up the party presidential race because a general election will be held in September.

(2) Okinawa assembly poll: 60 PERCENT disapprove of Guam pact

RYUKYU SHIMPO (Top play) (Full)
February 19, 2009

TOKYO 00000385 003 OF 006

The Japanese and U.S. governments have now signed an agreement to move U.S. Marines in Okinawa to Guam. In this regard, the Ryukyu Shimpo conducted a questionnaire survey of the Okinawa prefectural assembly's 47 members, excluding one under medical treatment, on their evaluation of the intergovernmental agreement. In the survey, they were asked if they could appreciate the Guam relocation pact. In response to this question, 28 persons (60 PERCENT) answered "no," with 16 persons (34 PERCENT) saying "yes." Negative answers outnumbered affirmative ones, reflecting the opposition parties' majority in the prefectural assembly. However, the ruling and opposition parties were almost split in their evaluation. There were also negative answers from some of the ruling parties' members.

The survey was conducted on Feb. 17-18, with a questionnaire form distributed to the 47 prefectural assembly members. Answers were obtained from all of them by yesterday.

In the opposition parties and neutral-standing groups, all of their 26 members said "no" when asked if they could appreciate the Guam relocation pact. In the ruling parties, all of the Liberal Democratic Party's 15 members and one of the New Komeito and Kenmin Kaigi group's members said "yes." One of the New Komeito and Kenmin Kaigi group's members and independent members affiliated with the ruling parties said "no."

In the breakdown of reasons for negative answers, there were views such as, "It will put taxpayers' money into building U.S. military bases," and, "It ignores and bypasses local communities by going ahead with the relocation of Futenma airfield within Okinawa Prefecture." Meanwhile, most of those affirmative about the Guam pact answered that it would alleviate Okinawa's base-hosting burden.

The agreement says Japan and the United States will follow their roadmap set to implement the realignment of U.S. forces in Japan in a package. When asked about this, negative answers came from all of the opposition parties' members and from 32 of the New Komeito and Kenmin Kaigi group's members and independent members affiliated with the ruling parties, with affirmative answers from 15 LDP members.

Concerning the issue of relocating Futenma airfield, a total of 16 persons (all LDP members plus one of the New Komeito and Kenmin Kaigi group's members) said the planned construction site of an alternative facility for Futenma airfield should be moved to an offshore area. Meanwhile, nine opposition party members insisted that Futenma airfield should be moved elsewhere out of Okinawa Prefecture or Japan. A total of 15 persons belonging to the opposition parties or among the independents affiliated with the ruling parties answered that the airfield should not be relocated and should be removed. In the New Komeito and Kenmin Kaigi group, four persons answered that the airfield should be moved to an offshore area or should be moved out of Okinawa Prefecture or Japan. Among answers outside the options given, one in the Reform Club referred to "Kadena base relocation, etc.," with two in the Social Democratic Party and Goken group calling for "removal."

(3) Naval hospital construction to start in FY2009

RYUKYU SHIMPO (Page 1) (Full)
February 19, 2009

TOKYO 00000385 004 OF 006

Ginowan-The U.S. military plans to relocate a naval hospital from Camp Kuwae (Camp Lester) in the town of Chatan to a Ginowan City area of Camp Zukeran (Camp Foster). In this regard, the Okinawa Defense Bureau will start the work of constructing the hospital's main building in fiscal 2009 after a field survey of cultural properties at the construction site, officials revealed yesterday. Ginowan Mayor Yoichi Iha is opposed to the hospital's relocation. However, the bureau told the Ryukyu Shimpo that it would start construction work after an excavation of the hospital's construction site and that scaffolding will be set up there to a certain extent.

"It's not appropriate to build a permanent base in a historic area," Iha said. "They have decided to move 8,000 Marines (from Okinawa) to Guam in the process of realigning U.S. forces in Japan," Iha went on, "and local people are saying we should review the SACO (Special Action Committee on Okinawa) agreement." He added, "So we cannot understand why they've got to build a hospital there." Iha will visit the Okinawa Defense Bureau today, and he will come up to Tokyo on Feb. 23 and visit the Defense Ministry and the American Embassy to request that the construction be suspended.

(4) Analysis of U.S. Marines Guam relocation agreement by Kunihiro Miyake -- Pact designed to maintain deterrence and reduce burdens on local communities

SANKEI (Page 2) (Abridged slightly)
February 19, 2009

The Agreement Concerning the Implementation of the Relocation of III Marine Expeditionary Force Personnel and Their Dependents from Okinawa to Guam was signed on the occasion of U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton's first visit to Japan since assuming office. The agreement will allow 8,000 U.S. Marines and their families to begin moving from Okinawa (to Guam) within several years, at the earliest. As a person with a first-hand experience in negotiations with the U.S. Forces Japan, which was astoundingly obsessed with retaining its vested interests, I felt a surge of emotion as I saw the pact inked.

There are many farfetched criticisms of the agreement, such as "having gone over the head of affected municipalities" or "an immense amount of burden." Some observers think the fact that Secretary Clinton visited Japan as her first foreign destination and that Prime Minister Taro Aso was invited to the White House as the first foreign leader to meet with President Barack Obama is more important than the pact itself. The agreement will be extremely vital for Japan five years, ten years from now, bringing numerous strategic benefits at the same time.

The Japan-U.S. alliance has evolved under the new regional strategic environment, while being masochistically criticized as being adrift since the 1990s after the collapse of the Soviet Union. I would like to examine this point while going over security-related political documents released recently.

For instance, the Japan-U.S. Joint Statement released in 2000 by the Security Consultative Committee (2+2 Meeting) notes, "It is extremely important for China to play a positive and constructive role," while referring to "persistent instability and uncertainty." The Transformation and Realignment for the Future released in 2005 specifies that the Japan-U.S. alliance "must evolve to reflect the changing security environment" and "need to pay attention to

TOKYO 00000385 005 OF 006

modernization of military capabilities in the region."

It is clear that not only North Korea but also China are included in such apprehension, though they are not named. The 2+2 Joint Statement of 2007 mentions the need to "encourage China to improve transparency in its military affairs, and maintain consistency between its stated policies and actions."

What about countermeasures?

The U.S.-Japan Roadmap for Realignment Implementation announced in 2006 notes that the realignment is comprehensive that includes not only Marines in Okinawa but also the Army at Zama, a carrier-based air wing at Atsugi, the Air Force at Yokota, and missile defense (MD), while playing up a plan to maintain deterrence and capabilities and reduce burdens on local communities, including Okinawa.

The goal of Japan and the United States is to reduce frictions with local communities and increase the U.S. military's combat power. They certainly do not regard North Korea and China as their enemies. The Guam relocation agreement is the new framework's first step for Japan to survive along with China against the backdrop of the drastically changing strategic environment in the Asia-Pacific region of the 21st century.

The agreement offers domestic merits, as well. What is particularly noteworthy is a plan for the U.S. military to return its bases south of Kadena Air Base. Although large facilities and areas have been returned to Japan in the past, lands of this scale have not been returned recently. A local person concerned estimates that the return of the bases will generate economic benefits worth 870 billion yen.

Let us consider the matter in business terms. In the agreement, Japan promised to pay up to 2.8 billion dollars, or 260 billion yen, which is a lot of taxpayer money. At the same time, it is an iron rule in the business world to pay a fair price for a valuable good or service. Regarding the question of relocating Futenma Air Station, a conclusion must be reached after discussing it thoroughly in Japan.

In terms of cost-effectiveness, I think the Guam relocation pact is quite a bargain internationally and domestically. The problem is Diet deliberations on the pact. Needless to say, sharing risks and costs is the essence of the Japan-U.S. alliance. The ability to run the government of those parties that cannot agree to such an accord would be questioned. Japan's future cannot be entrusted to lawmakers who use security affairs as a political tool.

Kunihiko Miyake: Entered the Foreign Ministry in 1978 after graduating from the University of Tokyo Law Faculty. Left the ministry in 2005 after serving in such posts as first secretary at the embassy in the U.S., First Middle East Division director, Japan-U.S. Security Treaty Division director, minister at the embassy in China, and Middle Eastern and African Affairs Bureau counselor. Served as the prime minister's official residence liaison officer in the Abe cabinet. Currently a Ritsumeikan University visiting professor and AOI Group president. Age 55.

(5) Disruption by Sea Shepherd unforgivable: Obstructive activities are crime, terrorism, Agriculture Minister Ishiba underscores

TOKYO 00000385 006 OF 006

Suisan Keizai Shimbun (Full)
February 12, 2009

Referring to the issue of the anti-whaling group Sea Shepherd's obstructive activities, Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries Minister Shigeru Ishiba during a press conference after a cabinet meeting on February 10 noted, "I realize such activities are crimes and acts of terrorism. Our country is conducting an investigation in accordance with the law. Obstructive activities are unforgivable for any reason. We would like to determine how to respond to the matter, including the clampdown of such activities."

Ishiba repeated: "Such acts of obstruction are unforgivable for any

reason. It is only natural for Japan to demand (that the concerned country) deals with such activities in accordance with its laws and ordinances and protect the lives and properties of the people of our nation."

Director General Yamada files complaints with ministers of Netherlands, Australia and U.S. on consecutive days

Fisheries Agency Director General Yamada on February 9-10 called to the agency the ministers of countries connected with the Sea Shepherd and filed a stern complaint against the dangerous act of obstruction by the group, requesting them to clamp down on such acts.

Yamada on the 9th called the ministers of the Netherlands, with which the Steve Irwin used for the obstructive activities is registered, Australia, where the ship makes port calls for refueling, and the U.S., where the Sea Shepherd's headquarters is located. He explained to the Dutch and Australian ministers a series of dangerous activities carried out by the Steve Irwin, using video images and photos. He then filed a strong complaint, noting, "We must call this act a crime." Yamada demanded both ministers implement a clampdown on obstructive activities by the Sea Shepherd and take measures to prevent or constrain such activities in the future.

The ministers who were called to the Fisheries Agency on the 9th both replied that they would convey the request to their home countries. Dutch Minister Gerald Michels said: "We recognize our responsibility as a country with which the ship is registered. The Dutch government made contact with the owner of the ship and some others after the incident in December last year and called on them to stop taking action that threatens maritime safety. We are now trying to determine what happened in the incident this time."

Australian Minister Allan McKinnon replied: "The Australian government condemns dangerous acts that threaten the safety of human lives on the sea. It has called on all sources involved to make sure that they undertake peaceful and responsible activities so as not to worsen the situation. We will probably investigate the illegal act of the Steve Irwin in compliance with our domestic law."

Director General Yamada on the 10th called Minister Counselor Robert Cekuta and filed a request. It appears that a similar complaint was filed, though the details have not been disclosed.

ZUMWALT